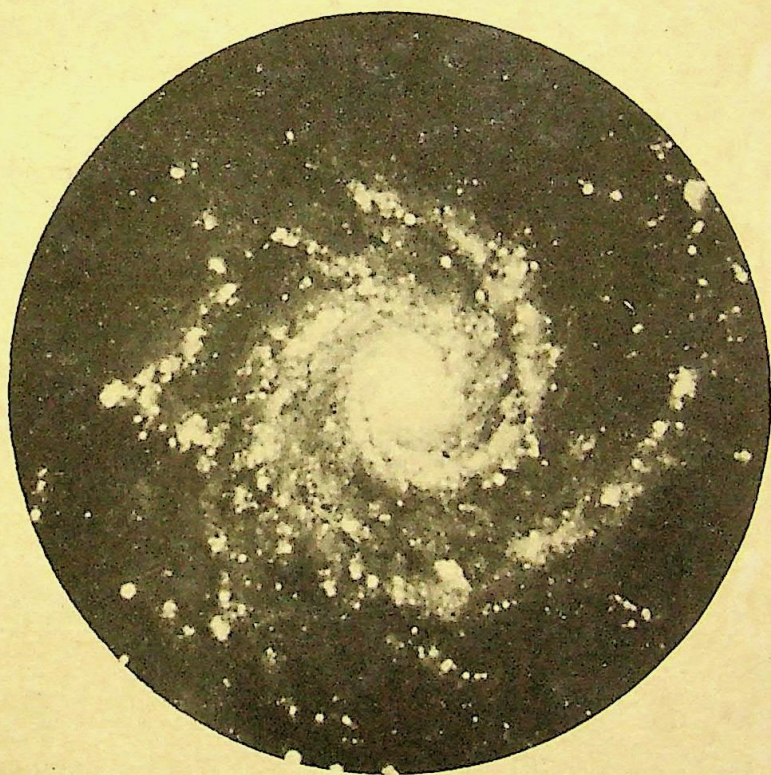


the Challenge of INNER SPACE



DARSHAN SINGH



THE AUTHOR

Born in 1921, Darshan Singh received his spiritual training from his Master, Baba Sawan Singh (1858-1948), and his father, Sant Kirpal Singh (1894-1974). He served successively in the missions of both saints and took up the spiritual work after Sant Kirpal Singh.

Sant Darshan Singh is the spiritual head of Sawan Kirpal Ruhani Mission. He was President of the Sixth World Religions Conference and is President of the World Unity of Man Society. A distinguished Urdu poet, he won the Urdu Academy Award for his poetry collection, *Manzil-e-Noor (Abode of Light)*. During his Second World Tour, he was presented with the keys of many cities and was honored by the Colombian parliament with its Medal of Congress.

Sant Darshan Singh is the present-day Master of Surat Shabd Yoga or the Science of Spirituality. He teaches a path of positive mysticism which does not require us to leave the world. He himself has had a distinguished career as a civil servant and now lives on his government pension. He is available to seekers at Kirpal Ashram, 2 Canal Road, Vijay Nagar, Delhi 110009. He gives public discourses at the Ashram on Sunday mornings and on Tuesday evenings.

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PREFACE

The saints and mystics come to tell us of a Reality beyond time and change. Their teachings have a timeless character; yet in order to reach the hearts of their listeners, they are presented in terms of the preoccupations and vocabulary of the day. Thus, earlier in this century when men were neglecting the spiritual life in the name of science, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh and Sant Kirpal Singh started giving out the age-old message of the Masters as a perfect science—the Mother of all Sciences.

We have come a long way since then, and the phenomenal advances we have made in the field of technology have significantly altered our vocabulary and our preoccupations. From June 9 to September 13, 1983, Sant Darshan Singh visited Europe and North and South America. He discoursed on a variety of subjects and wherever he went men and women from all walks of life turned to him for guidance in their quest for meaning and fulfillment. Whether he spoke to new-age groups, to diplomats or to congressmen, in Vienna, Paris, London, New York, Chicago, Toronto or Bogota, the presentation of the timeless teachings of the saints in the terminology of present-day space travel was one of the recurring themes of Sant Darshan Singh's Second World Tour.

Travel in outer space has become possible only in the past three decades. Sant Darshan Singh reminded his listeners that it was open only to a very few, demanding a combination of

exceptional ability and training. To support even one man in space, we need thousands of scientists and technicians and the resources of a super-power. Travel in inner space, on the other hand, is a gift of God, and like all His gifts is free and accessible to all. Given competent guidance, even a child can learn to go within and travel faster than thought itself.

The mystic journey is the supreme challenge which the saints and Masters have always presented to mankind. Sant Darshan Singh's discourse, *The Challenge of Inner Space*, comes to us appropriately in the language of our own day. In the words of Dr. Holguin Sardi, President of the Congress of Colombia, may it "be a seed that will fructify in time and enrich us."

VINOD SENA

KIRPAL ASHRAM, DELHI
JUNE 1984

THE CHALLENGE OF INNER SPACE

When travelling from London to New York recently, I read an article on the launching of the seventh Space Shuttle. It spoke in particular of the first American woman to go into outer space. It was significant for me that, as I was preparing to set foot in the United States, I should be reminded of the amazing achievements in the field of technology made by the advanced nations of the world. Indeed, ever since Sputnik went into orbit and man first set foot on the moon, outer space has caught our imagination. Each year brings new achievements in this field and opens up new vistas of space exploration. The American astronauts and Soviet cosmonauts are truly heroes of our times.

We have made remarkable progress and have even reached the moon, but we are no nearer the heart of our neighbor. Indeed, we find ourselves today on the edge of a precipice; one false step, and this beautiful planet of ours, with its myriad forms of life, will be destroyed. There is only one way if we want to achieve peace and lasting happiness—to take up the challenge of what I term “inner space”! We have to learn how to rise above body-consciousness. This human body of ours is the launching pad; Naad or Shabd or Word is the space vehicle; the Satguru or Master is the pilot and guidance system; and love is the special fuel which we need for this inner journey. Given these four essentials, there is no reason why we cannot, within this very lifetime, reach back to our source, the Creator. This is the timeless message of the mystics and saints.

Saints and prophets since times immemorial have been telling us that, just as we have worlds and universes outside, we have universes and worlds within. They have spoken of travel into these inner worlds, and the scriptures of all the great religions carry references to such mystic travels, the ultimate end of which is the communion of the soul with its Creator. For a few hundred years, man, in the name of science, especially in the West, has come to ignore this inner reality. But science itself is rediscovering this ancient wisdom. Beginning with Dr. Raymond Moody, who wrote the book, *Life After Life*, medical researchers have recorded the "after-death" experiences of a large number of those who had been declared clinically dead and were revived. Through such evidence doctors are beginning to awaken to the existence of a life after death or of a life before this life. They are becoming aware of an individual consciousness which does not die with the death of the body, of a consciousness which, while it is in the body, may identify itself with the body, yet is not of it. It is a consciousness which, in an unexpected crisis, is capable of standing apart from the body and of seeing and hearing without the use of bodily organs.

This truth is, in fact, the core of the esoteric and religious traditions coming down to us from the most remote times. Such traditions not only affirm that man is a spiritual entity, an entity which survives physical death, but they go on to

assert that it is possible for this entity or soul to rise above the body while it is still living and to enter at will the realms which lie beyond this physical world. Travel into outer space may be a new concept for science, but travel into inner space has been an integral part of mysticism since the dawn of history.

LAUNCHING PAD: HUMAN BODY

If we wish to explore the wonders of inner space, we must experience it ourselves. Our human body is the launching pad for going into inner space, for, as our saints, seers, and scriptures have been telling us, human birth is the only form of life in which we can find God. Man is the temple which the Lord has made with His own hands. God does not reside in temples made of stones by human hands. He resides in the temple which He has made Himself. All our saints and scriptures have been telling us that man is the roof and crown of creation, because out of the 8.4 million species of life, it is only in this human body that we get the golden opportunity of bringing about the union of our soul with the Creator. The Muslims refer to human birth as *Ashraf-ul-makhluqat*, and the Hindus call it *nar-naraini-deh*. The Christian scriptures tell us that God made man in His own image. It is said that when man was created, even the angels were asked to bow before him, for if angels themselves wish to attain merger of their soul with the Creator, they have to assume the human form.

The human body then is the launching pad for soaring into inner space. For that, we have to invert our attention from the world outside and enter within. Attention or *Surat* is the attribute of the soul. At present, our attention is going outwards through our various senses. We have nine apertures: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth and the two openings below. Our attention is caught up in sensual pleasures. The normal procedure ought to be that our soul should be in control of our mind and our mind should be in control of our senses, but the situation is quite the reverse. Man is an embodied soul, and both soul and mind are living together in this human frame. Our senses are dragging our mind, and since our mind and soul live together, our soul is also dragged into the sensuous pleasures. Thus, man finds himself helpless in extricating himself from the sensuous pleasures of the world outside in order to invert his attention inside. Is it not strange that on the one hand God has ordered that we lead a very ethical and spiritual life, but on the other hand He has lined every step of our path with temptations? Man's condition has been aptly described by Khwaja Hafiz, the great Persian Sufi. He says, "Man has been tied to a raft and left in the midst of the high seas with the command, 'Beware lest your clothes get wet.'" It is in such a plight that man realizes his state of helplessness. Then a cry comes from the core of his heart and from the core of his soul, and he prays to God to come to

his rescue. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, has said that God listens to the cry which comes out of the heart of an ant sooner than He hears the trumpeting of an elephant. One of my Urdu verses says,
Sunne ga rooh ko parwaaz dey ke dekh zaraa,
Qareeb hai usey aawaz dey ke dekh zaraa.

He is bound to hear you
 Would you but lift your spirit.
 He is so close to you,
 Call Him, He will surely respond.

So God listens to the cries coming out of the hearts and souls of such helpless seekers. He comes down from the highest heaven, dons the human attire in the form of a saint or Master and takes birth in this world to rescue man from the clutches of sensuous pleasures. He enables us to invert our attention from the outside world to the inner world and takes us back Home through a direct, firsthand contact with the Word or Holy Naam.

SPACE VEHICLE: NAAM OR WORD

As we have the vehicle of a spaceship to go into outer space, we use the vehicle of the Holy Word or Naam, as it is called, to travel through inner space. This holy Word has been described in the Bible, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." It is said that in the beginning there was God. He was all alone. He was an Ocean of All-Consciousness. Then He desired to become

many from One. This thought produced a vibration, and He assumed two primal manifestations: Light of God and Celestial Music or Harmony of Harmonies or the Lasting Unstruck Melody. Guru Nanak says, "Naam brought into being all the worlds and universes; Naam sustains all life and creation." So these two divine gifts of the Light of God and Music of the Spheres taken together are known as the Holy Word. This Creative Power has been described variously in the scriptures of different religions. It is called *Naad* in the Vedas, *Udgit* in the Upanishads, *Sonorous Light* by the Buddhists, and as *Sarosha* by the Zoroastrians. Similarly, the Muslims call it *Kalma*. The Sufis call it *Saut-e-sarmadi* or *Baang-e-aasmani*. The Sikh scriptures refer to it as *Naam* or *Shabd*, and our Theosophical Society brethren call it the *Voice of Silence*.

So this Creative Power first brought the inner regions into existence, and then it created all other universes, man and the remainder of the 8.4 million species of life. Since the beginning of time it has been God's principle and law that whosoever has attained communion of his soul with the Creator has done so by bringing it in direct contact with the Light of God and with the Music of the Spheres.

So we need the vehicle of Naam or Word for journeying into inner space. The question arises, "How to come by this vehicle?" The most sustained and systematic effort for contacting the Word has perhaps come from India. India

has been the cradle of many forms of yoga. The word "yoga" itself generally makes us think of certain postures and exercises which help to bring flexibility and health to the body. But used in its original sense, it stands for a discipline, a yoking of one's self. The end of this self-discipline is a state of *samadhi*. This term "samadhi" in Sanskrit implies a state of sameness or oneness with one's root or cause. In other words, yoga aims at nothing less than at-one-ment with the Creator. The Gita speaks of various forms of yoga, and students of spirituality in the West in recent years have become familiar with the variety of techniques which have been developed. Confronted by this variety, one can be bewildered. Which path is one to follow? The greatness of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj (1858-1948) and Param Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj (1894-1974) lies in the finality with which they answered this difficult question. They pointed to Surat Shabd Yoga, or the yoga of embedding one's attention in the holy Word, as the path which is at once the most accessible and natural, and the one which leads most directly and speedily to man's ultimate goal. They reinterpreted the teachings of this yoga, for the benefit of modern man, as a perfect science.

It was my great good fortune to sit at the lotus feet of these two divine beings, and if I am able to be of any help to spiritual seekers, it is through their grace. The path which they gave

out, unlike most yogas, does not depend on any special physical, emotional or intellectual ability. It prescribes no special exercises, and no strenuous postures. A child of five years can practice it as well as a centenarian who may be bedridden.

According to Surat Shabd Yoga, a direct linking with the Power of Naam or Word provides the most natural means for our spiritual progress. The word "surat" means attention, and such concentration is a primary attribute of the soul. Those who follow the path of the Masters aim at embedding the surat in the Shabd or Word, and they then follow the Word back to its Source.

The crucial factor on the path is the development of one's power of concentration. Attention, awareness and consciousness are, essentially, faculties of the soul. The seeker learns to focus these at the center between and behind the eyebrows. To help him in this endeavor and to prevent the mind from running to other things, the Master or guide gives a set of sacred names to be repeated not with the physical tongue, but with the tongue of thought. What makes such repetition or *simran* potent is not the words as such, but the fact that they have been charged by an Adept, by one who has become united with the Lord. As one's attention concentrates at the eye-center, the initial darkness is broken by unsteady points of light. With growing steadiness, a single point begins to sta-

bilize. This gives way to the mystic star against the sky. As one concentrates on the center of the mystic star, it gives way and one approaches the inner moon. In like manner the mystic moon splits to give way to the inner sun.

As the attention concentrates at the eye-focus or the seat of the soul, in addition to seeing, one begins to hear the unstruck divine Shabd or inner Music. Besides the practice of simran, one engages in that of *bhajan* or concentration on listening to the Sound Current within. As our consciousness concentrates at the eye-focus we can feel our body going numb. The motor currents which sustain the various bodily functions are left untouched, but the sensory currents begin to withdraw upwards. This process of sensory withdrawal is not dissimilar to that experienced at the time of death. However, mastered under the guidance of a perfect Adept, it is free of pain and is quite blissful. The process of withdrawal commences with simran. It is greatly speeded up during *bhajan* when we are concentrating on the inner Music. Just as you will find references in all mystic literature to the inner star, moon and sun, you will come across references to the bell, the conch, the flute and thunder.

When full bodily transcension is achieved, the inner sun gives way and we stand face to face before the radiant form of our Master. Now one perceives that, unlike any other teacher or friend, the Master is always with us and, in a

sense, is closer to us than we are to ourselves. Realizing that he is constantly protecting and guiding us, we now consciously place ourselves under his direction, and he directly guides us, stage by stage, through the remainder of our journey and does not rest until we are one with the Creator.

GUIDANCE SYSTEM: THE MASTER

Besides requiring a launching pad and a vehicle for journeying into space, we need a pilot and a guidance system. In the case of outer space, thousands upon thousands of technicians and scientists have to collect and feed data into a computer in order to enable those who are in the spaceship to journey safely. But for travel in inner space we need no other help besides that of the Spiritual Adept. It is the living Master who gives us the necessary guidance and takes us in the vehicle of the holy Word or Naam to our final destination. He teaches us how to rise above body-consciousness and grants us a firsthand experience of the Light of God and of the Music of the Spheres.

I am often asked about the necessity of a living teacher or a guru in the spiritual sphere. People say, "We have had such great teachers like the Buddha, Mahavira, Christ, the Prophet Mohammed, Guru Nanak and others. Why then do we need a living teacher now?" Why this need should worry us in the realm of spirituality alone is rather surprising, for in almost every

other field of human endeavor, we do clearly accept the need for a living teacher.

In the field of academic studies, we know that there is no substitute for a living teacher either for learning the sciences or the humanities. Accordingly, we send our children to school, and when they have grown up, we send them to colleges and universities. If I wish to perform an experiment in the field of physics, I would surely go to a really competent professor of physics. It would not worry me whether he comes from a particular nation or a particular religious tradition. What matters is his competence in a given discipline. The same is true of any of the arts. If we wish to learn an art, we have to study at the feet of a master artist. I am a poet myself and I had to go to one of the leading Urdu poets of the day, Janab Shamim Karhani, who taught me all about prosody and about the various refinements of poetry.

If there is no substitute for a living teacher in various secular fields, why should we not accept the same principle in the field of spirituality? Indeed, in the case of the mystical path, there are two special additional reasons why we must have a living teacher or a guide. Christ said that when he spoke to the multitudes he spoke in parables, but when he spoke to his disciples, he did so in direct terms. Now our scriptures describe the inner experiences and revelations given to us by the saints, seers and prophets. They often refer to regions which are beyond the

sphere of our intellect, and resort to parable, to allegory and to symbol. Unless we have the guidance of a Godman who has himself traversed the inner planes, who travels within every day, in fact several times a day, we may take as figurative what is meant to be literal, and as literal what is meant to be figurative.

Our scriptures are invaluable as records of past revelations, but if we are to understand their true import, we need the help of a living Adept. They are like the sleeping beauty, who came back to life only upon receiving the kiss of a living prince. Indeed, the Master, the Godman, the living teacher, by his magic touch, brings the holy books of the past to life and makes them talk to us with a directness which at first can almost take us by surprise.

Knowledge, however, is only part of the domain of spirituality and that, too, the lesser part. Mysticism ultimately rests on direct first-hand experience. It is not a path of dogma or of blind belief. Indeed, the Sikh scriptures go so far as to say, "I will not believe even my own Master unless I behold with my own eyes." We need to experience the reality within for ourselves; we need to travel into inner space. Crucial as the living Master's role is in giving us a right understanding of our scriptures, of our subject, it is even more indispensable when we come to the actual task of going within. We need someone who has himself traversed inner space, who has travelled through the many regions that lie

within and has, himself, merged in God. Indeed, if we are to succeed, so crucial is the role of the living Adept, that his importance can hardly be overemphasized. It is he who first draws us to his feet, for as a Sufi saying puts it, "Love first emanates from the heart of the Beloved." We are all lost sheep. We cannot find our own way without the help of a shepherd. We are not even able to know who our shepherd is. It is the Godman who, out of his compassion, takes mercy on us and draws us through his radiation. He brings with him the untold treasures of divinity from the Lord Himself, and he concerns himself only with their distribution. He does not look to our failings, our limitations, our sins. If he were to do so, who could prove worthy of his divine gift? The great gift which he grants to us is the gift of initiation or contact with the power of the holy Word or Naam. He teaches us the art of rising above body-consciousness, the art of dying while living. In reality, this art of dying while living is the art of attaining immortal life. Thomas à Kempis has said, "Learn to die so that you may begin to live." Similarly, the Muslim scriptures say, "*Mautu Qablantu Mautu*," that is, "die before death." Dadu Sahib, a famous Indian saint, has said, "Each of us must die on the appointed day, but why not learn to conquer death before our physical end?" When Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," he was pointing to the same principle. Nicodemus did not grasp his

meaning and asked, "How can we enter the womb of the mother again?" Jesus answered, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It is only when we rise above the body that we are born into the spirit.

To accomplish this end, the living Master teaches us the art of meditation, the art of concentrating at the third or single eye. This point between and behind the two eyebrows is truly the seat of the soul within the body. When our attention is fully concentrated here and we become oblivious of the body, the Godman unseals the inner eye. As Jesus put it, "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Not only does he manifest the Light of God to us by opening our third eye, but he also unseals the inner ear and unlocks to us the Music of the Spheres. As Khwaja Hafiz has said, "No one knows the abode of my Beloved, but the sound of bells comes from there."

As our attention begins to concentrate at the point referred to as the seat of the soul, our sensory currents begin to withdraw upwards. After we have crossed the star, the moon and the sun, we come face to face with the radiant form of the Master within. This radiant form is so enrapturing, so captivating, so enticing, that our soul progressively seeks to lose itself in the Master. The Master is no ordinary mortal, subject to the limitations that go with individual existence. Having become one with the Lord, the Master

shares in the Lord's attributes. Though he was the one who guided us at every step, at every turn, we may have been largely unaware of his pervasive care. However, from now on, we see him taking us under his wing and helping us, stage by stage, to traverse the inner spiritual planes. We have three bodily vestures: the physical, the astral and the causal. Having learned how to rise above body-consciousness, we step into the astral realm. The Master takes us to the causal and, from the causal, to the supracausal planes, thus enabling us to get rid of our astral and our causal vestures. It is only when the soul drinks from the pool of nectar beyond the causal plane, that it is finally divested of all traces of mind and matter. It is then that it cries out, "Sohang," or "I am that." Thereafter the soul merges with its own Master, fulfilling the first grand stage of mysticism known in Sufi literature as the stage of *Fana-fil-sheikh* or merger in the Master. Then, it continues its journey and attains final communion with God.

In speaking of the path of spirituality, I have occasionally sensed a certain fear among Western seekers about losing their identity in God. But such fears are unfounded, for what takes place is a progressive expansion of the self until it becomes coextensive with God. We are the gainers not the losers, becoming, in the process, conscious co-workers of the divine plan. This stage of at-one-ment with God is the final stage of mysticism and in Sufi terminology is described

as *Fana-fil-Allah* or merger in God. It represents the summum bonum of life and evades all description. The Masters speak of it as all happiness, all bliss, all understanding. He who has arrived here knows no rebirth. He has escaped from the whirling wheel of life to its still point, its center. Or, to put it differently, the sunbeam has become one with the sun, the drop has become one with the ocean.

When we travel in outer space, we inevitably run the risk of being struck by meteors, or, if we lose our course, of being drawn into the gravitational pull of one or the other of the heavenly bodies. Taking into view the complexity and dangers of outer space travel, much of the guidance is provided by ground control. Using sophisticated computers, tracking stations, and advanced communication systems on earth, mission control safely directs the space vehicle. A similar function is performed by the living Master. Though he is thousands of miles away, he provides guidance and assistance at all times to the disciple through the power of thought transference. Then again, travel in inner space is even more precarious than travel in outer space. The path is beset by distractions and temptations. It is no easy task to go beyond the reach of the mind. It is a most subtle adversary and finds a million different ways of keeping the soul within its ambit. If we succeed in completing the voyage to our final destination, it is on account of the all-encompassing love and grace

of the Master. We are not able to propel ourselves forward without his constant guidance, without his direction, without his protection, or else we would be lost a thousand times over before we even got through the preliminary stages of our journey. That is why Kabir has said,

God and my Guru both stand before me,
To whom should I pay obeisance?
I bow unto my Master, for it is through him
I have met the Lord.

My own Master, Baba Sawan Singh, used to say, "Take me as you would, your elder brother or your father. Take me as you would, your old friend or your teacher. Listen to what I say and practice what I teach. Once you go within, you are welcome to call me by whatever name you like."

FUEL OF LOVE

When we travel into space, we need special fuel for our spacecraft. The ordinary kinds of fuel cannot serve us if we are to traverse the astronomical distance which lies before us. For the voyage into inner space, we need a very special fuel—the fuel of divine love. God is love. Our soul being of the same essence as God is also love. And the way back to God is through love. If we are to achieve the ultimate aim of becoming one with God, we can do so only by developing love for Him and for all His creation. The word "love" comes readily to our lips, and we talk a great deal of the brotherhood of man and the need for understanding and compassion, but we do so

only from an intellectual level. It is no more than lip profession. We do not believe in love from the very depth of our heart, the depth of our soul.

St. John declares, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." Guru Gobind Singh says, "I tell you all, only those who love can know God." They speak of love which permeates every atom, every cell of one's being. It is a love which looks towards God and towards man; it is a love which does not neglect this life, this world, for the life beyond or the world beyond. Its commands are two-fold. As Jesus put it, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and at the same time, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It beholds all creation as God's creation. It makes us realize that if we fail to love God's creatures whether man or beast or bird we fail to love the great Creator. It is a love which inspires us, as it inspired St. Francis of Assisi, who regarded even the donkey as his brother.

The greatest criticism leveled against Eastern mysticism by philosophers and scholars in the West is that it represents a path of "life-negation." Men like Albert Schweitzer have said that Indian Yoga denies the reality of the world of actual experience and becomes a path of escaping responsibilities and obligations. Let me tell you that the Masters of the Surat Shabd Yoga do not believe in negative mysticism of this kind. They do not demand that we leave our hearths and homes, that we go into the deep icy

caves of the Himalayas or the burning sands of the desert and spend our lives in ascetic practices far from the noise and turmoil of the world. What they teach is, as I have called it, the path of *positive mysticism*.

We have our obligations to our parents, to our families, to our society, to our nation, obligations which today have become international and even interplanetary. We should meet these obligations to the best of our abilities, but while doing so we should not forget that the be-all and end-all of human life is self-knowledge and God-realization. Surat Shabd Yoga teaches us that mysticism is to be pursued not at the expense of life but rather as life's crowning element. It is not a path of renunciation, but of cultivating a spirit of detachment in whatever we do. If we can develop the capacity of concentrating on one thing at a time, we can make the best of this world, fulfilling its various obligations and commitments without neglecting our spiritual goal. Even the busiest man has the hours of the night to pursue the quest of the spirit. As Sant Kirpal Singh used to put it, "Make of your nights a jungle in which, free from the worries and tensions of this world, you can commune with your self and with God." Once we have learned to love the Lord, we will find that even while engaged in the duties and obligations of this world, we can be with the Beloved in thought. There is a Punjabi saying, "*Hath Kar Wal, Dil Yaar Wal*," "Your hand to your work and your heart on your Beloved."

So the path of Surat Shabd Yoga is the path of positive mysticism; it does not teach us to opt out of this world. Instead, it invites us to make the best of both the worlds so that we may have a very rich and fulfilling life and find fulfillment in the domain of spirituality as well. When young men and women come to me from the West, I sometimes find that they have broken off from their families. My first advice to them is to write to their parents immediately and to renew their ties with them. There are some who come after giving up their studies in pursuit of their spiritual quest. I advise them to go back to school. Still others come to me who have broken homes behind them or are on the verge of a breakdown of their marriage. I tell them that marriage is not a contract but a sacrament, and they must do their very best in order to save it and make it a success. I encourage my young friends to have a full and harmonious family life. If they have taken to drinking or to drugs or to any other antisocial habits, I explain to them that our soul is a conscious entity, and its level of awareness must grow higher and higher if it is ultimately to merge in the Ocean of All-Consciousness. In endeavoring to get them off liquor, off drugs, and off all intoxicants which take away from the consciousness of the soul, I always encourage seekers not to leave the mainstream of their society and to continue within their respective religious and social folds.

So what positive mysticism has to teach is the

Religion of Man. We must not forget that we are spirit and we must seek our spiritual development by practicing the art of meditation taught to us by the Master. However, we are also citizens of the world, and those around us are as much God's children as we are. Accordingly, there is a moral obligation which we have towards them, and we must not turn away from this obligation.

An ethical life is a stepping-stone to spirituality. We need a firm moral base and we need to cultivate the divine virtues of nonviolence, of truthfulness, of chastity, of humility and of selfless service. If you study the teachings of the great Masters of spirituality, you will find that while they direct our attention first and foremost to the spiritual reality which is at the heart of all creation, they simultaneously set before us a very high ethical and moral ideal. Man-making and God-realization must go hand in hand. With this in mind, Sant Kirpal Singh developed a self-introspection diary for spiritual seekers. He encouraged disciples to review, at the end of each day, their failures in respect of the virtues I have just mentioned—nonviolence, truthfulness, chastity, humility and selfless service. He divided these failures into failures in thought, in word, and in deed. He also included in his diary columns for recording the time given to the different practices of meditation which he taught and for recording inner progress. Introspection and self-criticism are fundamental to all self-

improvement and progress. If you study the lives not only of the saints but also of great men in various walks of life, you will often find that they owe their achievements and success to this habit. But what the Beloved Master did, though not something new, was to put this method of negative marking of one's performance by noting one's failures on a very systematic basis and to make it a first principle in the spiritual life.

So we have to be good men first. If we are good men then we can be good Christians, good Hindus or good Sikhs. If we are not good men, we can neither be true Sikhs, nor true Muslims, nor true Christians, nor true Hindus. Surat Shabd Yoga invites us to become holistic or integrated men. Human beings are constituted of three parts: body, mind and soul. We have a physical body, and it is only right that we develop ourselves physically and ensure the health of the body. Similarly, we have an intellect, and we are making every possible progress in the intellectual sphere. Indeed, our achievements in recent years in the fields of science and technology have been so spectacular that they have already bridged us with the surrounding universe. But along with our body and intellect, we have a soul which enlivens the other two, and we have neglected it so far. What saints and seers tell us is that we must develop spiritually also. It is only by doing this that we can hope to be fully integrated beings and realize the untapped potential within us. As I have said already, there is

nothing arbitrary or irrational in the teachings of the Masters. If they require the vegetarian diet, it is not on account of any dogma, but because the principle of nonviolence demands that we sustain ourselves on the least conscious forms of life. Again, if they ask us to eschew alcohol and hallucinogenic drugs, it is because our goal is higher and still higher levels of consciousness, and drugs and alcohol detract and distract us from our goal.

We are passing today through a very critical period in human history, and high ethical values have become all the more imperative. As Dr. Martin Luther King has said, "Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men!" Our technology and our progress have brought us almost to the brink of disaster and annihilation. If man is to survive, if the myriad forms of life which beautify this wonderful planet of ours are to survive, it is imperative that we have an ethical regeneration. Science and technology are themselves bringing us to this recognition. When I recently met one of the astronauts who had set foot on the moon, we spoke of travel through inner and outer space. There are parallels between the two, as I have been trying to tell you, and they are related to one another. He said that when his spaceship took off from the earth, he was no more than a scientist whose mind was entirely centered on the difficult mission on which he had been sent. However, when he had

completed this mission on the moon and was on his way home, his mind began to open up to the planets and the heavenly bodies before him. This mother planet of ours, surrounded with its heavenly halo of blue, looked so exquisitely beautiful that he was filled with love for all that it encompassed, for all the forms of life that it sustained. If he had left this earth as a scientist, he returned to it as a mystic.

He assured me that what he spoke of was not unique to himself, that, in fact, other astronauts and cosmonauts had had, in varying degrees, similar experiences. The day man stepped off from his planet, his personality acquired an interplanetary dimension. If travel into outer space can thus transform our modes of perception, imagine what more could be realized by travel into inner space. It is significant that the greatest exponents of universal love which the world has known have been the saints and mystics, the Masters of inner space. It is they who have made us recognize the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Love, according to them, is not something in the abstract but a living reality. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The annals of mysticism and spirituality are full of martyrs who gave their lives smilingly and willingly out of their love for mankind. For us in the world outside, the unity of all life is a mental supposition, an intellectual concept, but when our inner eye has been opened and we have

learned to go within, our vision grows ever more subtle. As we progress on the inner path, we increasingly perceive the Light of God radiating from every object around us. It is only when we see all creation sharing in the one life, the one divinity, that we can finally love our neighbor as we love ourselves. It is also only then that we acquire the infinite humility of the saints, for in the eyes of one who can go at will into inner space, the meanest creatures as well as the highest are blessed with divinity.

There is a story from the life of a famous lady saint from the Sufi tradition which brings this out rather well. Rabia Basri, who was a highly advanced soul, decided once to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca. As you all know, the Kaaba at Mecca is the holiest of the holy among the Muslims. Arabia is mostly a desert, and travel in those days was not easy. She joined a caravan in order to get to her destination. On the way, she noticed a dog who lay with its tongue sticking out and who seemed completely exhausted. Clearly, the creature was thirsty and if it could not be administered water, there was no chance of its survival. Filled with a sense of compassion, Rabia Basri began to look for water. As they were in a sandy waste, she had to go quite a long distance before she found a well. However to her disappointment, there was neither rope nor bucket at the well. It is said that she stripped off a garment and tied up the strips one to another. Even so, they were not long enough to reach the

water's edge. She then cut off her hair and making a rope of strands of her hair, she tied this rope to the one which she had already prepared from her dress. Together, these were just long enough to reach the surface of the water. Rabia pulled out the moistened end of the rope and squeezed the water into the mouth of the dying animal. The dog revived and very soon was up and about. Rabia then thought of resuming her journey with the caravan, but imagine her surprise to find that the caravan had already moved on. Whichever way Rabia looked in the sandy waste, there was no sign of the caravan. It was completely out of sight. She wondered, was she not destined to complete her pilgrimage? Just then, it is said, a voice spoke from the heavens and addressed her, "Rabia Basri, your pilgrimage is accepted."

We talk glibly enough of universal love, of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, but we merely speak at the intellectual level. It is only when the soul merges with God that we start seeing the Light of God not only in every man, but in every beast, every bird, every reptile, indeed in every atom of creation. If we can love every creature as did Rabia Basri, there would be no enemies, no aliens, no room for hatred and suspicion, no room for violence and war. We would all live in perfect harmony and peace as children of the one Father. From earth-earthly men, we have become planetary men, and now we have to become cosmic men so as to bring

down God's kingdom on earth. This is the goal towards which the saints and mystics have forever been directing our footsteps. They come to us saying, "We are not the body but spirit. We don't believe that there is any East or any West. We are all children of the same Father, and we belong to the entire world. Why take our word for it? Learn to rise above body-consciousness, go within and discover for yourself that Man is spirit, that the soul is of the same essence as God, that God is love and love itself is the way back to Him."

When I first arrived in the United States and spoke at Hunter College, New York, the people there thanked me profusely for having come to their country. I told them that though I was thousands of miles away from the land of my birth, I was still among my brothers and sisters. I quoted some of my Urdu verses on that occasion. Let me conclude by sharing these with you:

Naam hai admi to kya, asl mein rooh-e-ishq hun;
Sari zamin hai mera ghar, sara jahan mera
watan.

What if I am called a man?
 In truth I am the very soul of love;
 The entire earth is my home
 And the universe my country.

Galey laga lo har insaan ko keh apna hai,
Chalo to rahguzaron main bantatey huey pyar.
 Embrace every man as your very own,
 And shower your love
 Freely wherever you go.

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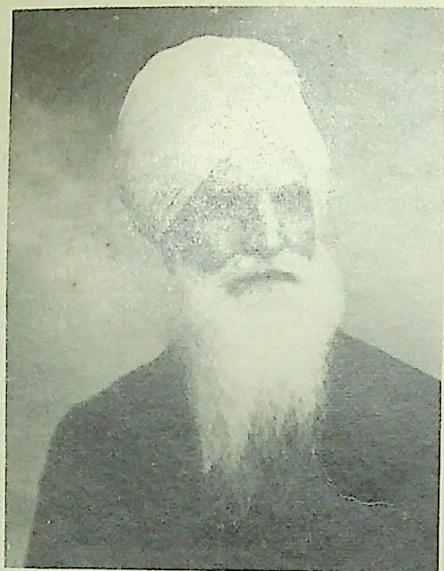
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Baba Sawan Singh (1858-1948): He made Surat Shabd Yoga (the Path of the Masters), which had been accessible to the few, available to mankind at large. He was the first to bring this inner science to the West and he prophesied a great spiritual awakening.

Sant Kirpal Singh (1894-1974): He presented the teachings of the Masters as a perfect science. Through three world tours, and books covering the entire field of spirituality, he brought the message of hope to every corner of the earth. In 1974 he declared that the golden age of spirituality had dawned.





At the National Congress, Republic of Colombia, Bogota, where Sant Darshan Singh was honored with the Medal of Congress, September 6, 1983.

...the world within is so rich that in reality it is the only one that makes man a true man. The world outside is only a reflection. You leave us the best teachings to follow. May your poetry and your message be a seed that will fructify in time and enrich us.

*—Dr. Carlos Holguin Sardi,
President, Congress of Colombia*